



# Children in the States

## WYOMING

September 2015

### Child Population

**138,323 children lived in Wyoming in 2014; 22 percent were children of color.**

- 78 percent were White
- 14 percent were Hispanic
- 1 percent were Black
- 1 percent were Asian
- 3 percent were two or more races
- 3 percent were American Indian/Alaska Native
- <1 percent were Pacific Islander

### Child Poverty

**More than 1 in 8 (12.8 percent) of Wyoming's children were poor in 2014, a total of 17,332 children.<sup>1</sup>**

- Wyoming ranked 1<sup>st</sup> in child poverty among states.<sup>2</sup>
- Nearly 1 in 17 children lived in extreme poverty at less than half the poverty level.
- The youngest children were the poorest age group. More than 1 in 7 children under age 6 were poor; more than 2 in 5 of the poor children were extremely poor.

**Children of color in Wyoming are disproportionately poor.**

- Nearly 1 in 3 Hispanic children and more than 1 in 4 American Indian/Native Alaskan children were poor in 2014, compared to more than 1 in 12 White children.

### Child Hunger and Homelessness

**Child poverty in Wyoming leads to unacceptable child homelessness and hunger.**

- More than 1,000 Wyoming public school students were homeless in the 2012-2013 school year.
- In 2014, 2 full-time minimum-wage jobs were necessary to be able to afford a fair market rent two-bedroom apartment in Wyoming and still have enough left over for food, utilities and other necessities.
- Nearly 19 percent of children lived in households that lacked access to adequate food in 2013. Nearly 27 percent of children ages 10-17 were overweight or obese in 2011-2012. Wyoming ranked 7<sup>th</sup> of 50 states in child food security and 10<sup>th</sup> in percent of children overweight and obese.
- More than 13 percent of Wyoming children relied on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to meet their nutritional needs on an average month in FY2013.
- Nearly 81 percent of Wyoming children receiving a free and reduced-price lunch during the school year did not participate in Summer Nutrition Programs in 2014 – ranking Wyoming 15<sup>th</sup> of 50 states in ensuring that children have adequate summer nutrition.

### Child Health

**Although the majority of Wyoming's children have access to health coverage, that does not guarantee enrollment in coverage or access to care, which can jeopardize their education and their future.**

- In 2013, 85.2 percent of eligible children participated in Medicaid or KidCare CHIP, Wyoming's Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). In FY2013, a total of 58,644 Wyoming children ages 0-18 were enrolled in Medicaid, and 8,815 in KidCare CHIP.
- Nearly 8,000 Wyoming children ages 0-17 (5.7 percent) were uninsured in 2013. The state had the 23<sup>rd</sup> lowest rate of uninsured children among states.

<sup>1</sup> A family of four was poor if it was living on less than \$23,834 a year, \$1,986 a month, \$458 a week and \$65 a day, and extremely poor if living on less than \$11,917 a year, \$993 a month, \$229 a week and \$33 a day.

<sup>2</sup> The state ranked 1<sup>st</sup> is the best for children for that outcome and the state ranked 50<sup>th</sup> is the worst for children.

- In 2011, fewer than 6,000 uninsured children ages 0-18 were eligible for Medicaid or KidCare CHIP but not enrolled.

## **Early Childhood and Education**

### **Lack of early childhood investments deprives children of critical supports in the early years and reduces school readiness.**

- In 2013 the average annual cost of center-based child care for an infant was \$9,233 – 109.7 percent more than the average annual in-state tuition and fees at a public four-year college in Wyoming.
- Wyoming did not have a waiting list for child care assistance in early 2014.
- On average, 44 percent of Wyoming's 3- and 4-year-olds were enrolled in public or private preschool from 2011-2013.

### **Wyoming's schools fail to educate all children, closing off a crucial pathway out of poverty.**

- In 2013, 63 percent of Wyoming's fourth grade public school students were unable to read at grade level and 52 percent were unable to compute at grade level.
  - 76 percent of Hispanic fourth graders could not read at grade level and 71 percent could not compute.
- 80 percent of Wyoming public high school students graduated on time in 2012, placing Wyoming 27<sup>th</sup> among states. 58 percent of Black students and 77 percent of Hispanic students graduated on time compared to 82 percent of White students.
- Students who are suspended or expelled are more likely to drop out of school. During the 2011-2012 school year, 6 percent of Wyoming public secondary school students received at least one out-of-school suspension, placing Wyoming 4<sup>th</sup> among 48 ranked states. For Black and Hispanic students, the percentages were 12 percent and 8 percent, respectively.

## **Children Facing Special Risks**

### **Many vulnerable children need treatment, services and permanent families.**

- In Wyoming, 720 children were abused or neglected in 2013 – 5.2 out of 1,000 children.
- On the last day of FY2013, there were 996 Wyoming children in foster care.

### **Too many Wyoming children are involved in the juvenile justice system.**

- 4,773 children were arrested in Wyoming in 2012– a rate of 8,165 out of 100,000 children ages 10-17.
- 249 children and youth were in residential placement in 2011. 5 percent of the children in residential placement were Black, 12 percent were Hispanic, and 73 percent were White.
- No Wyoming children were in adult jails in 2013.
- Wyoming spent 3.2 times as much per prisoner as per public school student in FY2012.

### **Fewer than 10 children and teens were killed by guns in Wyoming in 2013.**

For sources please visit [www.childrensdefense.org/cits](http://www.childrensdefense.org/cits)